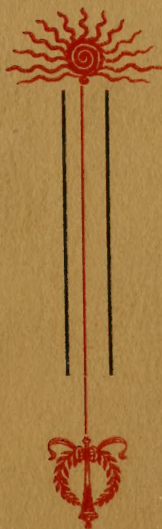


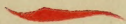
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the **Rubāiyāt** of a **Rum-Seller**



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The Rubáiyát of a Rum-Seller



"We hold these truths to be self-evident:
that all men are created equal: that they are
endowed, by their Creator, with certain inalienable
rights; that among these are life, liberty and the
pursuit of happiness."

From the Declaration of Independence.




ERNST ALTSCHUL

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“Just a Short One”

To the few who never knew the enjoyment or pleasures,-or only knew the evil and curse of drinking,- or to those who use drink-agitation professionally, this booklet is of no purpose.

But to those of my friends, in all walks of life, with many of whom I came personally in contaminating proximity during my thirty-five years of handling that vile commodity, these few silly verses are dedicated. And, friend or foe, “Wet” or “Dry”, will acknowledge that the writer’s experience in booze-ology exceeds the one in versification.

ERNST ALTSCHUL

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF A RUM-SELLER

LOSE up your swinging bar-room door tonight,—

Take off your apron and your jacket white,—

You never shall reopen anymore,

So reads the law—the law is ever right!

OR centuries you've kept an open shop
Where thirsty travelers were fain to stop

And to partake of your polluted wares—


Hereafter they shall nary take a drop!



OU must refrain to sell that devil's brew
Which thousands of unfortunate creatures slew—
Brought poverty and want to thousands more—
Your cursed trade, from now on, is taboo!



HAT if from heavy work their back is arched—
If in the sun they many miles had marched—
A cooling swallow from the watertap
Will soon refreshen tongue and palate parched!



WINE is a mocker, and strong drink does rage,

Just as it did in every time and age.

Eschew it, shun the filthy, pois'nous draught,

For it will naught but misery presage.



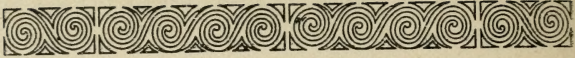
SINCE every mother's son, you say, was born

Did not the Lord grow barley, hops and corn?

What other use is there for grape and rye?

But that who wants, may have his little horn?





ENIGHTED waster, hear: the grain we need

The millions of our hungry kin to feed;

Those whom we sent to legislative halls

Have, wisely, so decided and decreed.





RAPES were not grown therein to dissipate,

But for some presidential candidate

And orator, to use their sweetly juice

His silver-tongue and throat to lubricate.






N after years,—inscrutable and mute,

On shelves of the Smithsonian Institute

There will be jars, hermetically sealed,

With liquids filled, which once did man pollute.





WITHIN those flasks there will be spirits pent,

Each catalogued and named with its content;

A silent witness for posterity—

To past debauchery a monument.




HAT golden-hued extraction from the corn,

In mountainous Kentucky's moonshine born,

Brought but delirious excess to those

Who trembling, bleary-eyed, craved for it each morn,





HAT amber fluid, sparkling in the sun

Was "lagerbeer", drank muchly by the Hun,—

It caused the world's most horrible of wars,

And put their sotten armies on the run.





HAT flask with liquid cristalline, named Gin

Was much consumed by men of darkened skin;—

It set their beastly passions all aflame,

And drove them to atrocities and sin.



HAT emerald-shining distillate of menthe,

And next, the flask with nerve-killing Absinthe—

Had started thousands on the downward path,—

Formed for their young and ruined life the pinth.





THE tawny mixture in that brown carafe

Might have been ale, or stout, or 'alf-'n-'alf—

The lowly rabble of the British Isles

Much of it in their misery would quaff.



AND so with all the bottles, down the line

White, golden, amber, or incarnadine,—

Brought naught but curse on generations past—

Whether it whisky, cordial was, or wine.





WAY with the despised drink, accurst!

For if we ever wish to quench our thirst

Let us hie to the well, or rippling brook,

Let us drink water, water till we burst.—”





OUR argument and logic will not down!

For was there man of low or high renown,


That has in whisky, cordial, beer or wine,

(Though he had drank them) ever known to drown?







UT many men, courageous and brave,
Have found a desolate and sudden grave
In the deep river's swelling, rising flood,
Or in the treacherous, salty ocean wave.



ITH resignation I accept my fate,
To close my 'joint', as ordered, soon or late;
But what will be the politician's lot,
To whom I ever served as tempting bait?





HE lobby-worker, whether big or small—

In council-room or legislative hall,

Who ever used the gin-mill as butt—

What NOW will serve his purpose as a stall?




AS it a franchise or for light or gas,

He wanted, surreptitiously, to pass

And let the goodly people's rights go hang,—

He rattled noisily the whisky glass!






F railroad corporations looked for prey,

To take a valuable right-of-way—

A rigid Sunday-closing liquor law

Would quickly all suspicious fear allay.






HE senator, to raise a heavy tax,

And shoulder it upon the poor men's backs,

Flaunts prohibition doctrines in your face,

To make your watchful scrutiny relax.





IKE prestidigitators on the stage,

Who fool the public, just to earn their wage,
And wave a handkerchief before your face,—
And from a borrowed hat bring forth a cage,



IVE rabbits, goldfish—bowls—and other stuff
The objects are;—the kerchief is a bluff,
And being used but as a camouflage—

You watch the kerchief,—and the rest you muff.





HE borrowed tile?—it is your valued vote,

Their schemes and machinations to promote —

The rabbits?—special privilege and graft;—

The kerchief?—the saloon they ever quote.



ND after they, with pomp and hue, adjourn,

Your bragging congressman will home return;

'I've put the kibosh on the demon drink'!

But of his evil acts you never learn!





NOUGH of this; for what does it portend

To have your legislator for a friend?

He shakes your hand and begs for your support,—

And when elected, 'does you,' in the end.




ACH dollar, which is for my liquors spent,

Serves e'en a patriotic, true intent;

Don't I contribute part to pay the sold


Of traffic-cop, as well as President?






HOW many are there, who will sadly miss,
Their eye-opener, their nightcap, or their fizz—
To whom a night's carouse was endless joy—
A jag—the acme of all earthly bliss!

WHAT will the life be of your bon-vivant,
Who ever worshipped women, wine and song?
His trinity will scatter into parts—
Just like a fork which lost its middle prong.





WILL now your proud and mighty steamboats slide

Into the dangerous tricky ocean-tide

Without the bottle broken on its bow—

Un-named, un-christened, and un-sanctified?



WHAT is the future of the chorus-maid?

What of the cabaret-frequenting jade?

The actress, fond of bathing in champagne

Must take ablutions now in lemonade.





HE after-dinner speaker, who would boast

About the virtues of his worthy host—

How can he the assembled guests enthuse

When he in buttermilk must give his toast?



F all your writers and your bards were wrong,

You must revise their story and their song,—

For e'en your holiest and best of Books

Refers to wine,—and other drink that's strong.





OUR sculptors, painters, who to art devout,

Depicted truly feast and drinking bout—

Even the artists of your magazines

Shall change their subjects—or be driven out.



OUR steins and beakers from your sideboard cull—

At all your clubs your membership annul,

For it is there you drink and find good cheer—

Without the drink—'t were desolate and dull!





RUE, many are there who, intemperate,

Cannot their craving thirst for liquor sate—

How will you force 'gainst appetite a law?

How will you for one's stomach legislate?



T is a pity, there are many such,

Who should not drink the stuff,—nor taste—nor touch—

As they know not the demarcation line

Between what is "sufficient" from "too much".





curse on him, whose eager drink's desire
Makes him to dastardly, low crime aspire!
He who committeth murder, rape or theft
Through drunkenness, has earned the scorching pire!



WICE cursed be he, whose thirst's insatiate greed
Makes his dependents want for cloth and feed!
Who 'stead of comfort, happiness and cheer
Bring's wife and child but misery and need!




UT is it reason, or enough excuse
That for one man's irrational abuse
Of that, which otherwise portends no harm,
Its benefits the ninety-nine should lose?



OULD you have stop apothecaries sell
That which will ease your pain, or make you well,
Because the taking of an overdose
Has sent some fool to heaven or to hell?





HOSE, who indulge in epicurian bout,

And suffer with dispepsia and gout

As consequence,—would you their feasts outlaw?

He who provides them—would you drive him out?



OW many thoughtless, heedless wives aspire

To jewels, ornaments and fine attire!

Is it the milliner's or jeweler's fault,

That they bring bankruptcy upon their sire?







HOSE fashion shops, where all your ladies fair
Procure the garments, hats and shoes they wear—
Would you them close—because the harlot buys
Her fin'ry there, her victims to ensnare?




T takes a sober mind to figure crime!
The burglar, cannot through your window climb—
Or open safes—nor can the forger pen
His false designs, when steeped in liquor's slime.





WOULD those, who, ever since the world began,
Through schemes and tricks have robbed their fellowman,
Evince their deals amidst a drunken brawl
Successfully educe their wicked plan?



If you demolish every liquor-glass
Will crimes and all their perpetrators pass
Into oblivion for evermore?
I fear they will be with us still—alas!







FTER effacing every cheerful drink,
And silencing the goblets' merry clink—
Ring you the bell at high Elysium's door?—
Do you expect to reach millenium's brink?



F prohibition drives all vice away,
And virtue and morality hold sway,—
Abolish all your judges and your courts—
Give the police continuous holiday!






F your experiment will stand the test—

Will misery, and want, and wrong arrest,—

And prove the panacea for all ills—

Then I shall gladly follow your behest.

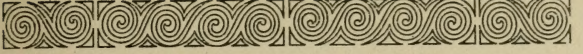


OYFULLY shall I close my bar-room door—

Into the gutter all my liquor pour—

I shall repent, at leisure, for my sins—

My rum-hole shall be closed for evermore!



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